

The Endangered Species Landowner Incentive Program

Beginning in Fiscal Year 1999, Congress authorized funding for the Endangered Species Act Landowner Incentive Program to provide long-sought financial assistance and incentives to private property owners to conserve listed, proposed, and candidate species, along with species that are likely to become candidates in the near future.

Enthusiasm for these initiatives is expressed by the fact that the first year, 145 proposals totaling \$21.1 million competed for \$5 million in grant money!

For the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Endangered Species Landowner Incentive Program has opened doors, generating the trust of landowners through technical assistance and funding. Funding from the program has helped to leverage contributions from other sources.

Here are examples of the 22 projects that the Service funded in full or in part in FY 99 under the Landowner Incentive Program:



■ **South Carolina Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program:** 21,802 acres on 23 properties will be managed with fire; 260 acres of longleaf pine will be planted; and 172 artificial nesting cavities will be installed.

■ **Hawaiian Fauna and Flora:** On the island of Maui, funding will make possible a 13,200-foot-long hog-wire fence in the Pu'u Kukui watershed to protect 13 species of rare plants and 9 species of rare animals from the effects of rooting by wild pigs. The Maui Pineapple Company is providing 43 percent of the cost of the project.

■ **In a first-of-its-kind application:** More than \$400,000 to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission will equip the Alaskan longline fleet with special bait-sinking devices, called "tori-lines," that will help to deter sea birds, such as the endangered short-tailed albatross, from attacking baited hooks during fishing operations. Partners working together to determine the most effective deterrent device include the National Marine Fisheries Service, the University of Washington Sea Grant Program, and commercial fishing-gear manufacturers.

Short-tailed albatross on Torishima Island in Japan. Feather-hunters in the 19th century and early 20th century practically eliminated the species. Even now, only about 1200 of the birds exist. Vulnerable to nature, they nest on the slope of an active volcano. Photo by Hiroshi Hasegawa



Karner blue butterfly. Photo by Ann B. Swengel/USFWS

■ **In Wisconsin,** funds will be used to plant lupine, the host plant for the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The habitat improvement project will restore oak barrens and pine barrens, create corridors to connect butterfly populations, and establish sand prairie buffers to protect the species. Partners include private landowners, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, The Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Milwaukee Public Museum. The Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, a candidate species, will also benefit from these efforts.

■ **In western Pennsylvania and western New York,** led by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Service will coordinate habitat restoration on the upper French Creek watershed to benefit listed mussel species, primarily by fencing cattle from the stream bank. Partners include The Nature Conservancy, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and California University of Pennsylvania. Matching funds will provide a three-to-one match for the project!